7. Multiple Ontologies: Religiosities, Philosophies, Languages and Society

The goal of ICAS 13 is to facilitate global transdisciplinary conversations and to link such conversations with local realities. The broader scope and description of this theme can be found under the 'thematic cluster' header which provides ideas and examples of proposal topics that can be submitted under this theme. If you think your proposal fits in multiple themes, please choose the one that you believe suits best.

ICAS 13 would like to introduce the local realities in these transdisciplinary conversations, the explanation of the theme starts off with a note on 'local context' intended to highlight connections between heterogeneous Asian Studies research and the particular perspective from Surabaya, Indonesia.
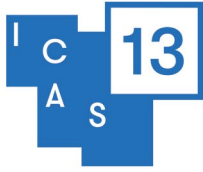
This theme welcomes proposals with a broader disciplinary and geographical perspective as well as proposals that connect these perspectives to the Indonesian context.

The local context

Home to the world's largest Muslim population, Indonesia nevertheless has a long history of interacting with various religions, beliefs, and philosophies from many parts of the world. Indeed, the archipelago-state can be considered as a crossroad involving different parts of Asia and in fact different continents. Surabaya, notably, offers a unique environment where many communities hailing from different religious and linguistic backgrounds settled, grew, and interacted with each other. Some physical reminders of this diverse legacy still exist until the present, but for others, one can only see architectural remnants. For instance, in the former European quarter of Surabaya, a mosque, church, and local temple are located next to each other. However, by recognizing only six official religions, Islam, Protestantism, Catholics, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, the Indonesian state presently excludes various alternative ways of being in this world. In the domain of language, Indonesia is among the world's most diverse countries. While the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, is almost universally understood, many regional languages are currently under threat. As a result, the multiple ways of seeing the world – religiously, philosophically, and linguistically – constitutes one of Indonesia's great riches, which, like its natural environment, calls for appreciation and protection.

This thematic cluster

Under this theme, we welcome contributions that deal with the multifaceted aspects of religion, religious practices, religious communities and/or its entanglements with society and language, including Sanskrit, Latin, Arabic and others. In most cases, the social aspect of religions, beliefs, or doctrines cannot be separated from their political-economic contexts. In the name of the Divine Power, many actors, including states, exercise their control over others, as is conspicuously seen everywhere in Asia and other parts of the world. Beyond religion, many states also exercise their power to impose a national language that affects many indigenous languages, spoken by people whose religious practices might also be under threat. In other words, the notion of citizenship also should be addressed. On the one hand, many negative impacts and abuses have been perpetrated in the name of religion; on the other hand, religiosity can be a source of hope, resiliency, and transcendency, especially in a time of despair, misery and crisis. Under this section, we would welcome

contributions that address these issues and additional questions associated with the role of religions, religiosity, beliefs, languages, and philosophies in society, both at the individual and collective level.

These topics can be explored through various formats of engagement, including papers, panels, roundtables, posters, audio-visuals and other media, to ensure a broad forum of academic and civic exchanges. We also welcome you to share other formats and ideas; to propose activities, workshops and exhibitions to enrich the exchange of knowledge and experiences.